

Christmas Greeting to the Nation

December 24, 1999

The President. On this holiest of holidays, Hillary and I would like to wish all of you a very Merry Christmas. This is a season of joy, a time for family and friends to rejoice in one another's company and in the magic of Christmas.

The First Lady. At the dawn of this new millennium, let us reflect on our hopes, our dreams, and the gifts we can give to the future. Let us all cherish the gift of every child among us and pledge to build a world worthy of all our children.

The President. May the spirit of the season be with you today and throughout the new year. From our family to yours, Merry Christmas, Happy New Year, may God bless you all.

NOTE: The greeting was videotaped at approximately 2:30 p.m. in Room 459 in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building for later broadcast and was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 23 but was embargoed for release until 12:01 a.m., December 24. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this greeting.

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Radio Remarks for the "Lost Lives" Christmas Eve Broadcast

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3625, Maura Monaghan, from Tyrone. A Catholic girl, just 18 months old. To her family, little Maura Monaghan was known simply as "Mossie." She was the youngest victim of the Omagh bombing. Her mother, Avril, her grandmother, Mary Grimes, and her unborn twin sisters also were killed on that Saturday afternoon, the 15th of August, 1998, at 10 past 3 p.m., when that terrible bomb exploded.

They had gone to Omagh town as a special treat, to celebrate Mary Grimes' birthday. They had even been to church earlier that day, the same church where their funeral services would be held just a few days later.

I still feel a personal connection with this tragedy. Two weeks later, Hillary and I visited Omagh. We saw the scene where 31 people were killed in the worst, single incident of The Troubles. And then we went to the Leisure Center, where the families of the victims had had to wait for news of their loved ones. They were again to meet us, as were many victims who had been terribly injured on that day.

That meeting was one of the most difficult and moving experiences of our lives. But I have to say, it was also one of the most uplifting. Again and again, people who had been injured or lost loved ones said, "Keep going with the peace process. Keep going, and don't give up on it. Do whatever you can to make sure that nobody else suffers as we are suffering."

I know they suffer still. I know the first dawn of the new millennium will be a sad time for those who remember the family and friends who should still be with them. But I never forgot their courage and their faith in the new beginning for Northern Ireland and neither did so many of you, who raised your voices and said, "Enough is enough."

And so we kept going. And now it looks as though, after all the difficulties, the new day we've been talking about for so long is finally at hand.

And so today, on Christmas Eve, we remember little Maura Monaghan, Mossie, a beautiful, curly-haired angel who was loved